

THE USAID VISION FOR ACTION: PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE INCLUSION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

Executive Summary

USAID’s vision is a world in which the basic and universal human rights of LGBT people are respected and they are able to live with dignity, free from discrimination, persecution, and violence. In this world, the legal rights of LGBT people are upheld; they are able to participate fully in democratic decision-making in their households, communities and countries; they have access to sustainable livelihoods, economic assets and resources; and they are not barred from accessing the basic education, health and other services that are enjoyed by their fellow citizens and that are essential for personal well-being and growth. LGBT people and their allies have the right and the capacity to come together to advocate for the equal treatment for all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

There are numerous urgent challenges facing LGBT people worldwide and attempts to address these challenges often confront deep-seated resistance and other barriers. At the same time, however, there are many windows of opportunity to ensure that USAID’s development work is truly inclusive, capitalizing on the forward momentum and increased visibility of work in this sector that has built up over the past few years, especially since the release of the *2011 Presidential Memorandum* that required all U.S. agencies engaged abroad to “ensure that U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance promote and protect the human rights of LGBT persons”.

To move this agenda forward, USAID will adopt the following principles: (1) accountability for country and cultural context, (2) ensuring openness and safe space for dialog, (3) integrating LGBT issues into USAID’s work, (4) supporting and mobilizing LGBT communities, and (5) building partnerships and creating allies and champions. From this set of five core principles for action and based on promising approaches for work on these issues, USAID will prioritize the following “next steps” to ensure that our development work and our workplace elevate LGBT equality:

- Increase capacity for inclusive development within USAID
- Apply selectivity and focus to integration efforts
- Build capacity of local LGBT organizations in developing countries
- Hold ourselves accountable for upholding non-discrimination requirements
- Expand a learning agenda

This Vision outlines the principles and steps that USAID will follow, in partnership with a wide array of champions and allies, to protect and empower LGBT people, increase the capacity of LGBT CSOs, and integrate and elevate attention to LGBT issues into our work, resulting in more transformative development results.

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USAID recognizes that LGBTⁱ people are an integral part of every society, and are our colleagues, neighbors, friends, and family members. Through this Vision, USAID intends to re-affirm to staff, our partners, the international community, and beneficiaries that the LGBT community is a vital force in the work that we do and an integral part of our success.

Respect for human rights has long been a foundational principle underlying international agreements such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which opens with the unequivocal reiteration that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” USAID’s Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (June 2013) stated that integrating democracy, rights and governance (DRG) principles into USAID’s programming is fundamental to sustainable growth and progress. In so doing, the DRG Strategy elevates and underscores the Agency’s commitments to protecting and promoting the universally recognized human rights of all groups of people. These rights include the right to be free from physical assaults, to enjoy political rights and civil liberties, to have equal opportunities and non-discriminatory access to public goods and services. Non-discrimination is the basic foundation of USAID’s inclusive development approach of empowering women and girls, marginalized ethnic populations, indigenous peoples, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and LGBT individuals. This Vision for Action reiterates USAID’s commitment to championing the rights of LGBT persons and promoting their inclusion in development efforts as part of a coordinated, whole of government effort.

ⁱ USAID recognizes that words, and the understanding behind them, to describe sexual orientation and gender identity differ in different contexts and cultures. It is our intentional to use LGBT as an inclusive term for all sexual minorities. For a full list of the terms used in this document, see the Glossary on page 13.

USAID's Vision

USAID's vision is a world in which the basic and universal human rights of LGBT people are respected and they are able to live with dignity, free from discrimination, persecution, and violence. In this world, the legal rights of LGBT people are upheld; they are able to participate fully in democratic decision-making in their households, communities and countries; they have access to sustainable livelihoods, economic assets and resources; and they are not barred from accessing the basic education, health and other services that are enjoyed by their fellow citizens and that are essential for personal well-being and growth. In this world, LGBT people and their allies have the right and the capacity to come together to advocate for the equal treatment for all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

USAID seeks to improve the lives of LGBT citizens around the world by becoming more inclusive in our development efforts and by ensuring that LGBT people have access to and reap the benefits of our programming, and in so doing, are instrumental in the transformation of their own societies with the end result that each and every citizen is recognized and equally valued. The inclusion, protection, and empowerment of LGBT people is critical because drawing on the full contributions of the entire population leads to more effective, comprehensive, and sustainable development results.

Statement of the Problem

Violence and Hate Speech Against LGBT Individuals

According to the UN's first report on LGBT individuals in 2011, homophobic and transphobic violence has been recorded in every region of the world, and is often driven by a desire to punish those who violate traditional norms around gender and sexuality.¹ Violence against this group tends to be especially vicious compared to other bias-motivated crimes: "incidents often show a high degree of cruelty and brutality and include beatings, torture, mutilation, castration and sexual assault."¹

Consistent with this overall trend, surveys in the Europe and Eurasia region detail the numerous types of offenses that are inflicted upon LGBT people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity (SOGI); in one survey in the Republic of Georgia, 32% of LGBT individuals reported having experienced physical violence.⁴ In some countries, (e.g., El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa) it has been documented that lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women are at risk for being raped or forcibly impregnated, in some cases due to widely held beliefs that women who are raped by a man will change their sexual orientation.¹ There are numerous reports detailing the targeted killings of LGBT people, including 31 in Honduras over an 18 month period, 44 bias-motivated killings in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) region in 2009, and targeted killings of lesbians in South Africa, among others.¹

LGBT people have also suffered violent attacks in response to peaceful advocacy campaigns and demonstrations, and events that have content related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity often appear to ignite organized resistance, led in some cases by certain faith-inspired groups, Neo-nazis, paramilitary groups, or those using strong nationalist rhetoric to stir up anti-LGBT sentiments.¹ LGBT leaders and civil society activists have been targeted by the most extreme forms of violence in some cases. Specific examples include the murder of transgender teen Dwayne Jones in Jamaica, LGBT activist David Kato in Uganda, and the torture and murder of Eric Ohena Lembembe, the Director of Cameroonian Foundation for AIDS in Cameroon.

Violent incidents or acts of discrimination frequently go unreported because victims do not trust police, are afraid of reprisals, are unwilling to identify themselves as LGBT¹, or because they fear that the police may “out” them to their families and communities. Consistent with these fears, across the world, there are widespread reports of police inaction or brutality in response to SOGI-related violence. For example, in 2007, the director of the Kosovo LGBT organization QESh received repeated death threats; after the police offered no protection, he was forced to flee the country.⁵ Worldwide, hate speech and death threats posted on the internet are increasingly being reported, but often receive little attention by authorities. In general, because most countries do not have systems in place for reporting or monitoring cases of violence or human rights violations directed at LGBT people, the prevalence of these phenomena are very difficult to accurately ascertain.

Lack of Participation in Civil Society and Democratic Processes

LGBT participation in democratic processes and government is limited. Of the countries in which USAID operates, only a handful have public officials in office that are openly self-identified as LGBT. At the beginning of 2013, there were three Central/Eastern European LGBT members of parliament, two African, two Latin American, one Middle Eastern, and one Asian.⁶ While the number of openly LGBT representatives in government continues to grow, significant obstacles remain for successful representation and public-sector support for LGBT equality. Addressing these obstacles is critical because the presence of even a small number of openly gay legislators has been associated with the development of more “just” policy prescriptions for society at large and their presence may have a transformative effect on the views and voting behavior of their straight colleagues.⁶

Globally, the number of civil society organizations (CSOs) working on the human rights and well-being of LGBT persons and communities remains relatively small and many of these struggle financially. In many countries, only a very small number of LGBT-focused CSOs exist that have the capacity to conduct effective representation and advocacy activities. Many LGBT-focused CSOs have difficulty locating a safe space in which to meet and operate or engage publicly on issues related to their cause.⁷ CSOs that are working on LGBT non-discrimination efforts are sometimes subject to state repression, censorship and violence. Individual human rights defenders who openly advocate for the LGBT community often face hostility and violence, including from police and security forces, as well as secondary victimization from authorities when they attempt to report crimes perpetrated against them or their community. In many countries, LGBT CSOs have been left out of the development dialogue and process, and other more “mainstream” CSOs and CSO networks that work on related topics (e.g., gender equality, broad human

BOX 1: Legal Barriers

LGBT individuals and groups face a multitude of legal barriers, including criminalization of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Examples of legal barriers include:

- Lack of legal status in 76 countries and territories that currently criminalize same-sex sexual relations. In many of these countries, individuals can be imprisoned and in at least 5 countries they may be sentenced to death on the basis of consensual sexual activities.¹
- In the majority of countries in which USAID operates, there is no non-discrimination statute regarding employment, access to housing, and government services that is inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The lack of legal recognition for transgender persons has placed them outside laws that protect citizens from abuse and discrimination, and hinders their access to health, education, and other social services.
- Laws banning “homosexual propaganda to minors” in some Eurasian countries have raised fears that any show of public support for LGBT people could result in fines or arrest.

rights issues) do not reach out to, support, or seek common cause with LGBT CSOs. Those that do may open themselves up to possible retribution or violence by groups opposed to advocacy for LGBT rights.

Obstacles to Accessing Healthcare

Discrimination against LGBT people at the personal, familial, and societal levels has been correlated with long-lasting physical and mental health problems, including high rates of psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and suicide.⁸⁻¹¹ Because of these links, LGBT people, often from an early age, have significant needs for psychosocial support and health care.¹² However, accessing health care services is among the most daunting challenges the LGBT community confronts. In many developing countries LGBT people who seek health care services of any kind encounter rejection, humiliation, derision, or at best sub-standard services, leading in some cases to pronounced health disparities among LGBT populations. Even where health care providers, clinicians, and government health agencies are accepting of LGBT clients, the service providers often lack basic information or training about the distinct health concerns and appropriate medical and counseling practices for LGBT persons, and for accepted “third” gender persons in countries such as Nepal.

HIV/AIDS is a sector that distinctively illustrates the pervasive impacts of stigma and discrimination against the LGBT community. Globally the burden of HIV infection among gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender persons is disproportionately high; MSM are 19 times more likely to

have HIV when compared to men in the general population and transgender individuals showed an alarmingly high HIV prevalence rate, ranging from 8% to 68%.¹³⁻¹⁵ While HIV rates among the general population are falling in many countries, the rate of new infection among MSM have been consistently high or are increasing, particularly among youth.¹⁶ This epidemic continues to expand in most low, middle and upper income countries in 2013. Even though these individuals contribute significantly to national epidemics in both concentrated and generalized epidemic settings they are often marginalized and neglected. Evidence shows that stigma, discrimination, and social and legal obstacles block (LGBT)

BOX 2: Humanitarian Assistance

LGBT communities are rarely identified or included in disaster risk reduction policies and training. As an “invisible population” LGBT people are often further marginalized during times of disaster, denied access to humanitarian aid and relief efforts, and subjected to greater violence and vulnerability in the aftermath of crisis.

- An Oxfam International study of the responses to the 2004 Indian Tsunami showed that many Aravanis (physiological males who have feminine gender identity) were almost completely excluded from relief package distribution, were not given temporary shelters, and were not covered by any social security scheme.² The Aravani population was systematically excluded from mainstream gender discourse and rendered invisible with no official records of deaths and losses or subsequent trauma and neglect.
- The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission’s study of the responses to the 2010 Haiti earthquake showed that because aid ration schemes primarily targeted women, gay men and transgender persons were unintentionally denied aid.³ Some lesbians’ access to food aid centers was also inhibited because they lacked male companions to provide physical protection against violence. In internally displaced persons camps, LGBT persons were subjected to increased risk of gender-based violence as well as secondary victimization by the police. Following the earthquake, sermons on the radios and in churches blamed LGBT “sinners” for incurring God’s wrath.

community mobilization around HIV. Gay men and other MSM and transgender persons who are living with HIV often lack access to HIV education or fear entering the healthcare system for services, such as antiretroviral therapy, thereby impeding or delaying access to life-saving prevention, care and treatment services.¹⁷

Impact of Discrimination on Livelihoods

Discrimination, stigmatization, and exclusionary laws can contribute to poverty, and in some cases, may result in extreme poverty. These same factors also create hurdles for reducing poverty, thus negatively impacting the livelihoods of LGBT people and their families around the world in multiple ways. Unfortunately, however, there are serious gaps in the available data on the income levels and economic status of LGBT people in most developing countries, requiring extrapolation from data that is available elsewhere.

First, LGBT youth are at increased risk for being abandoned by their families and rejected, barred, or deterred from accessing schools, all of which undermine their ability to learn and develop the skills that are necessary for a productive life as an adult. Even though comparable data for the LGBT community is lacking in most developing countries, research in the United States shows that 26% percent of LGBT youth who come out to their families are met with the demand that they leave home. Forty percent of homeless youth are LGBT even though only approximately 5% of the population identifies as LGBT.¹⁸ Homeless youth often do not attend school, and worldwide, LGBT youth that are in the school system often report being harassed or bullied by their peers.^{19,ii} Homophobic bullying in schools has been found to cause absenteeism in a significant number of students; in one of the largest safe school studies to date, students who were bullied because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation had a 27% higher absenteeism rate than those who were not.²⁰ Similarly, an online survey sponsored by Vietnam's Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population showed that 77% of LGBT youth experienced verbal abuse and 44% experienced physical assault in school; 42% of these youth lost interest in school, 33% skipped school, and 6% abandoned school.²¹

The livelihoods of LGBT people are further impacted by discriminatory employment practices, which render them vulnerable to poverty, and predispose them to risky and illegal occupations. The vast majority of developing and many developed countries do not have any employment protections for LGBT people. As a result, LGBT people are frequently not hired explicitly because they are LGBT. Similarly, a lack of employment protections makes LGBT people particularly vulnerable to being fired without cause. This negatively impacts their earning potential and ability to contribute to the positive economic development of their home countries. Left without access to secure employment, some LGBT people resort to sex work or other illegal activities to earn income. Data from the United States show that transgender adults are four times more likely than the general population to have household incomes of less than \$10,000/year, and 16% reported sex work or other underground activities as a means for earning income.¹⁹ Transgender people in Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru and Chile are also disproportionately represented among sex workers.²²⁻²⁵ A comparative study of African countries showed strong relationships between intolerance and stigma and the social risks faced by LGBT people, including being evicted from their homes, loss of livelihood, and increased risk of becoming a sex worker.²⁶ Working in the sex industry, in turn, may increase the risk that diseases that disproportionately affect some LGBT sub-populations may be transmitted to previously uninfected people.

ⁱⁱ Data collected from transgender adults in the US shows that seventy seven percent reported harassment and assault during their K-12 education

Key Principles for Programming

There are numerous urgent challenges facing LGBT people worldwide and attempts to address these challenges often confront deep-seated resistance and other barriers. At the same time, however, there are many windows of opportunity to ensure that USAID's development work is truly inclusive, capitalizing on the forward momentum and increased visibility of work in this sector that has built up over the past few years, especially since the release of the *2011 Presidential Memorandum* that required all U.S. agencies engaged abroad to "ensure that U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance promote and protect the human rights of LGBT persons,". In moving this agenda forward, USAID will rely on the following core principles:

Account for Country and Cultural Context

The conditions faced by LGBT people vary considerably from country to country, with levels of violence, discrimination, and stigma reflecting prevailing local contexts. At the same time there may exist values, norms, customs, language, perceptions and approaches to development challenges held by individual communities that can be useful in understanding how to best approach LGBT issues. Furthermore, the cultural context in which LGBT persons reside may also create parameters for them to self-identify not as LGBT first, but rather as an ethnic, religious, or other group. It is critical to conduct an analysis of this complex array of traditions, customs, and cultural realities prior to developing strategies or programming so that these will be relevant and grounded in specific contexts. In addition, a clear understanding of existing local laws (including levels of government enforcement), policies, and regulations is fundamental to effectively working with LGBT organizations and achieving results-oriented programming. USAID will engage a wide array of stakeholders to map and analyze country conditions and cultural context and will seek windows of opportunity to support local leaders and organizations that can be agents for cultural and legal progress. Tailored, targeted solutions that are appropriate to individual country contexts preserve the "do no harm" principle that is a key underpinning of work with vulnerable groups in development and humanitarian assistance programming. Respecting and understanding country and cultural parameters in our work will also ensure that USAID's programming resonates with local stakeholders, reducing the likelihood that activities are seen as donor driven, "Western imports" with no intrinsic value to the surrounding context.

Openness and Safe Space

As we move forward it will be critical to be inclusive of diversity of opinion and understanding of LGBT issues, both within USAID and with external actors and partners. USAID will support and create safe space for difficult conversations about beliefs, values, and personal biases. A concerted effort will be made to include individuals who may not previously have been engaged on this issue in regular consultations and outreach events. Consistent and intentional inclusion of stakeholders with different opinions and beliefs, when institutionalized, will ensure that our work leads to more sustainable programming that benefits LGBT communities and that all voices are heard and are able to contribute fully.

Integrating LGBT Issues into USAID's work

Achieving inclusive development programming will require increasing the integration of LGBT issues into USAID's organizational processes, policies, and programming where windows of opportunity arise and capitalizing on lessons learned from prior work in this area, particularly under health and DRG portfolios. A deeper understanding of local concepts of identity, influential actors, laws, customs, geo-political, religious and historical facets of targeted communities will underpin these efforts. Better integration of LGBT issues within Missions' portfolios will result in comprehensive and sustainable development outcomes and the full participation of LGBT people in development programming. While more inclusive development will be fostered best by integrated programming that reaches people from all marginalized groups (e.g., women and girls, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, LGBT persons, etc.), analyses may also reveal critical gaps that are best addressed by stand-alone programming designed to address particular unmet needs of the LGBT community.

Support and Mobilize LGBT Communities

Under this Vision and consistent with USAID Forward, the Agency will support and empower local LGBT CSOs. Open and meaningful participation of LGBT individuals and communities is essential to more equitable and effective development in all sectors, including health, education, economic growth, democracy, human rights, and governance. Inclusion of LGBT persons in the development process ensures that the voices of marginalized citizens are heard, and promotes transparency in decision making that will substantially impact their well-being. It also ensures that governments and donors are accountable to the needs of the LGBT community. USAID will leverage the skills, passion and knowledge of CSO's who have a deep knowledge of local context, political will, and feasible entry points for action. Actively promoting the involvement and ownership in development activities by an array of local stakeholders, including LGBT individuals and LGBT CSOs, will underscore USAID's determination to do "nothing about them without them."

Build Partnerships and Create Allies and Champions

BOX 4: LGBT Global Development Partnership

Recognizing that a partnership approach can be the most effective and sustainable way to build global solutions to complex development problems, USAID came together with the Swedish International Development cooperation Agency, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, the Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute, the Williams Institute, and Olivia Companies to create the LGBT Global Development Partnership. The partnership will operate in multiple regions of the world and includes:

- **Needs assessments** - to bridge the gap in knowledge about the political and socio-economic realities of local LGBT communities, landscape analyses have been conducted to assess societal attitudes, anti-discrimination protections, incidents of violence, access to healthcare and education, and the unemployment status of LGBT people in all countries involved in the program.
- **Leadership development** - to promote LGBT civil society participation in politics and advocacy at the local, regional, and international levels, political leadership training will be provided to local leaders and CSOs and capacity will be built around communication strategies, including media production and media campaigns.
- **Coordination and integration** - starting with the landscape analysis, the partnership team works closely with USAID field officers within each country to coordinate efforts and resources. Mission programs and Partnership activities leverage each other to increase the project's reach and impact for local LGBT communities.
- **Cutting edge research** - filling a large gap in the existing body of research, the partnership will support an analysis of the economic cost of excluding LGBT people from full participation in key sectors of society.

Advancing the human rights and well-being of LGBT individuals requires engaging a wide spectrum of partners. USAID will build partnerships with entities such as host governments, human rights defenders, philanthropic foundations, bilateral, and multi-lateral donor agencies, private sector companies, and influential community and religious leaders. Working together allows energies and resources to be harnessed and results in scale and transformation that is not achievable individually. Crafting cohesive and complementary projects ensures that efforts are mutually reinforcing and non-duplicative. Strengthening engagement with private sector partners will ensure that technologically innovative solutions are brought to the table and leveraged. Across all of these efforts, USAID will not only seek out existing allies and champions of LGBT rights, both domestic and international, but will also support the widening and deepening of these networks.

Promising Approaches to More LGBT-Inclusive Development Work

Based on work to date, USAID's experience demonstrates that the following approaches hold promise for increasing the extent to which LGBT issues are integrated across Agency programs and operations, and for ensuring equal access to and benefit from development programming.

Building Attention to LGBT Issues into Operational Policies and Procedures

- USAID policies, guidance, and strategies are inclusive of LGBT concerns. Key examples include the USAID Policy Framework, USAID Country Development Cooperative Strategy (CDCS) Guidance, USAID Project Design Guidance, Automated Directives System, USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, USAID's Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG), the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, USAID's Global Health Strategic Framework, USAID's Policy on Youth in Development, and others. Even in the most restrictive environments, Missions have successfully incorporated LGBT stakeholders and concerns into the analyses that feed into inclusive development objectives and intermediate results in Missions' CDCSs,ⁱⁱⁱ Project Appraisal Documents, budget requests, Operational Plans and Program Performance Reports.
- An innovative approach to operationalizing LGBT integration has been taken by Missions that develop LGBT inclusive Mission Orders (MOs) that establish responsibilities and outline the processes and procedures for protecting and promoting LGBT individuals in Mission operations and through programming. In some cases, these MOs are standalone documents that focus exclusively on LGBT issues whereas in others, they are addressed along with gender, diversity, and/or disability in a single inclusive development Mission Order. Some Missions have also established Inclusive Development Advisors or Working Groups that monitor and advise the Mission on how to better integrate LGBT issues (as well as those impacting other vulnerable groups) across the Missions' policies, programs, and practices.

Building on Ground-breaking Sectoral Programming Examples

Although projects designed to address LGBT issues have been developed in conjunction with work in a variety of sectors at USAID Missions, the majority of this programming has been in health and DRG. Programming in these sectors has yielded valuable insights and lessons learned that can be applied to similar work in other sectors as well. Examples of these approaches include:

ⁱⁱⁱ The Regional Development Mission to Asia (RDMA) also addressed inclusive development concerns in its Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS).

Box 3: Innovative Approaches at USAID Missions

USAID/Ecuador and USAID/Nicaragua issued Mission Orders promoting LGBT inclusion that elevate awareness, provide training and outreach to LGBT program beneficiaries, and promote non-discrimination at Missions.

USAID/Malawi issued an inclusive development annex to the Mission's CDCS which served three purposes. Firstly, it served as a brief about the state of LGBT inclusion in Malawi. Secondly, it provided ideas about how to advance disability and LGBT issues in Mission operations and programming. And lastly, it included a Mission Order to guide the Mission as it brings inclusive development to life in its operations.

USAID/Colombia piloted the new position of Inclusive Development Advisor to assist the Mission in developing, integrating, and implementing programs, practices, and policies with a gender focus that is inclusive of males, females, and gender non-conforming (LGBT) persons, as well as persons with disabilities. The Inclusive Development Advisor will implement USAID's development policies across sectors and offices.

- ***HIV/AIDS programming:*** USAID-supported HIV research on the burden of disease, needs assessments, evaluations, and operations research used to design effective program models of targeted prevention, care and treatment services for populations at highest risk, have included gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender persons for over twenty years. These efforts have expanded with increased funding over the last decade as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The earliest efforts by USAID supported the development of routine surveillance through behavioral and epidemiologic surveys that provided evidence of the disproportionate burden of HIV risk among these populations; this data sparked international advocacy efforts that resulted in the inclusion of MSM as priority populations in National AIDS Strategies and national planning bodies even where local leaders initially did not acknowledge the existence of men who have sex with men in their countries.

USAID develops tailored, comprehensive approaches for HIV-related services supported through peer-led outreach and community-based mobilization while simultaneously working towards an enabling policy environment, addressing stigma and discrimination. Early interventions were developed first in Asia and Latin America, and more recently were integrated into programming in Africa. The work with transgender persons, even more visible and stigmatized, has been accomplished largely through programs for men who have sex with men, although approaches tailored specifically to this sub-population have expanded significantly in some countries in recent years. USAID's comprehensive model has been replicated by other donors and influenced the development of normative international guidance promoted by PEPFAR, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Joint Program on AIDS (UNAIDS) as international best practice.^{iv}

^{iv} This guidance ensures complementary approaches among national governments and other donors including the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria -- which dramatically leverages and scales up PEPFAR's investments. USAID's Vision for Action builds upon a long history of support and global leadership in the fight against AIDS.

- ***Democracy, Rights and Governance (DRG) sector:*** USAID's efforts to support democratic consolidation have taken two approaches; integration of DRG principles into other technical sectors in order to improve development outcomes in those sectors, or through stand-alone DRG programs. USAID/Colombia has taken the latter approach by supporting local government institutions and civil society organizations to achieve multiple milestones on the road to inclusive rights in Colombia. For example, with USAID support, in 2010, the Colombian National Police issued Directive No. 006 barring discrimination including on the basis of sexual diversity and gender identity. Police forces and the LGBT population have subsequently engaged in dialogues in eight cities to prevent human rights violations by the police. In a major step forward and with advocacy from USAID, the Colombian Constitutional Court extended partnership benefits on inheritance and property rights to same-sex couples and recognized *de facto* civil unions in 2009. Also with USAID support, the Government of Colombia's implementation of the Victims and Land Restitution Law ensures that the Victims Unit provides psycho-social and physical support to the LGBT armed conflict victims as well as access to historical memory initiatives to ensure reparation to the LGBT community. Finally, other work has focused on self-protection and legal remedies for transsexual women in the region who are often exposed to severe human rights violations.

Support for Research and Learning

USAID is committed to utilizing a variety of tools and methods to better understand the lives and needs of LGBT people across the globe, to using this information to design more inclusive programming, and to developing a learning agenda around LGBT issues that institutionalizes the lessons learned from our work in this sector, including the numerous lessons that have been documented in project reports and other program documents. Missions and Bureaus have already taken initial steps to move this agenda forward, for example:

- The "Being LGBT in Asia"^v activity will result in a first-of-its-kind joint analysis undertaken by USAID and UNDP together with grassroots LGBT organizations and community leaders to understand the challenges faced by LGBT people in seven countries in Asia. The project is based on a multi-sectoral analysis that integrated attention to health, DRG and other sectors, while drawing on donor collaboration, innovative and participatory methodologies, and multimedia and social media technologies to support the empowerment and education of both stakeholders and development partners. The results of the analysis will inform development experts as they craft policy and programming, and provide them with the appropriate tools for successful engagement with LGBT persons.
- The E&E Bureau in Washington has produced *Testing the Waters: LGBT People in the E&E Region*, a comprehensive overview of the situation that LGBT people face with a focus on quality of life issues, violence and discrimination, challenges in accessing healthcare and other social services, discrimination in employment, and an over-arching description of the institutional capacity of regional LGBT NGOs. The document includes specific sectoral recommendations as to key entry points for programming designed to meet the needs and be inclusive of LGBT people and CSOs, and is expected to result in better-targeted, culturally-sensitive development programming in the region.

^v The full title of this activity is "Being LGBT in Asia: A Participatory Review and Analysis of the Legal and Social Environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Persons and Civil Society".

USAID Priorities as We Move Forward

USAID will prioritize the following “next steps” to ensure that our development work and our workplace become more inclusive of LGBT people and issues. The Agency currently has in place an Agency Coordinating Committee (ACC), led by the Agency’s Senior LGBT Coordinator. The ACC is comprised of members from Bureaus and Operating Units across the Agency, as well as a network of over 300 LGBT points of contact (PoCs), including at the majority of USAID Missions. This organizational structure will serve as the foundation for realizing the Vision and coordinating follow-on activities across the Agency and with other USG entities.

Increasing Capacity for Inclusive Development at USAID by Developing Training and Other Tools and Resources

USAID’s work addressing the rights and needs of LGBT persons is relatively new with the exception of programming designed to protect and assist those who are most adversely affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. The experience of other bilateral donors in this field suggests that building staff capacity through training is critical to achieving results. USAID is committed to the development of a suite of new and innovative training opportunities, building on the successful launch of the Agency’s first online course on LGBT inclusion (*Introductory Training on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Inclusion in USAID’s Workplace and Programming*) as well as other successful trainings at Missions, and including new efforts to integrate attention to LGBT issues into trainings primarily designed to address other topics. Additional tools may include “How-To Notes”, sector specific materials, resources that provide concrete recommendations on how to integrate LGBT issues across USAID programming, and other materials. This suite of resources will be useful not only for LGBT PoCs but for all USAID staff who are involved in the design, management and monitoring of Agency programming. Building the capacity of USAID staff to do gender and other social analyses themselves will not only build their awareness of the critical role that cultural norms play but will also be a major step forward for inclusive development efforts. The end goal of the suite of capacity development efforts is an expanded network of LGBT allies, champions and PoCs, and an increase in the number of USAID leaders who are energized and engaged by this issue.

Selectivity and Focus in Integration Efforts

USAID’s focus on the integration of LGBT issues into programming will initially prioritize key entry points in sectors where action is urgently needed and where the Agency has the deepest level of prior experience, in particular, the health and DRG sectors. Integration in these sectors has been successful -- safe and effective -- even in challenging environments. Being selective acknowledges the resource constraints the Agency faces and is consistent with the principles of selectivity and focus. Building on country assessments and other available diagnostics, LGBT inclusive approaches and activities may be integrated into other sectors as well, including humanitarian assistance, gender-based violence and anti-trafficking activities, and education and economic development programs. Relatively simple, inexpensive entry points for LGBT inclusion in new sectors include the collection of quantitative and qualitative data that address the experiences of LGBT persons, research that fills gaps in knowledge about LGBT issues in particular contexts, and focus groups and other methods of consulting with LGBT stakeholders.

Building Capacity of Local Organizations and Leaders

Missions' and Bureau's support for CSOs should be strategic and focused on providing accessible, practical tools and resources that can be easily used and maintained given country conditions and that will ensure that LGBT people have capable organizations that can advocate and provide for their needs. Among other things, these resources will focus on strengthening CSOs' strategic planning, financial management, internal governance processes, and human resources. This organizational development strengthening will be paired with cultivating the use of innovations in communication and networking, including the use of social media platforms and internet communication technologies, which allow for greater and more efficient interaction between USAID's partner CSOs and their LGBT beneficiaries, as well as for more effective outreach and awareness raising. Some of these methods and technologies are being explored and advanced in the context of HIV programs, but they could also be leveraged to support an "early warning system" at country level to monitor and document human rights abuses, threats and violence. USAID's approach will also include reaching out to sub-groups of LGBT persons who may have been overlooked in prior conversations about LGBT issues, either overall or in particular sectors.

Accountability for Non-Discrimination

Non-discrimination is a critical foundation for protecting and promoting LGBT persons, both in their communities and in their workplaces, and also for ensuring equitable access to USAID programs and services. USAID already has in place a series of requirements that are designed to reinforce this foundation by protecting individuals against discrimination based on socio-demographic characteristics including race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability status, among others. USAID strongly encourages its implementing partners and their sub-awardees at all tiers to also develop and enforce comprehensive non-discrimination policies for their workplaces that address protection for all employees, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, subject to applicable law.^{vi} In addition, an inherent principle of USAID assistance is that all beneficiaries may participate in USAID programs without discrimination. For our development assistance to truly become inclusive and to ensure that LGBT people have full access to USAID programs, all Operating Units are accountable for ensuring that USAID staff and implementers uphold these existing provisions and scrupulously avoid engaging in discriminatory behaviors in the context of USAID-funded programming.^{vii}

Learning Agenda

^{vi} Partners are also strongly encouraged to adhere to non-discrimination principles in their employment practices based on USAID's June 19, 2012 policy "Award Provisions Encouraging More Comprehensive Non-discrimination Policies by USAID Contractors and Recipients" and in the ADS. USAID's hortatory policy strongly encourages contractors and grantees not to discriminate on the basis of either sexual orientation or gender identity in their programs/projects, or with respect to hiring their own employees, subcontractors, or sub-grantees. Through this policy, USAID's efforts to protect and promote the human rights of LGBT individuals will also be significantly strengthened as USAID contractors and grantees review their own non-discrimination policies.

^{vii} As per the June 2012 Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 302, *Award Provisions Encouraging More Comprehensive Nondiscrimination Policies by USAID Contractors and Recipients*, "USAID continues to encourage full participation in, and partnership with, nongovernmental organizations, including faith-based organizations, and the non-mandatory components of [these ADS provisions] shall not be construed to affect the mission, character or identity of these organizations." Full text is available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/302mbf.pdf>

Moving this Vision forward will require gathering and sharing knowledge and formulating a learning agenda centered on LGBT inclusion. Progress in addressing the key needs of the LGBT community will be accelerated by closing key information gaps, by gathering more robust baseline data, supporting research, testing new and innovative ideas, and subjecting our programming to rigorous evaluation. When the results of these efforts are shared in an open and transparent manner, the growing community of practice engaged in this work will be able to build on successes to date and avoid repeating mistakes or missteps.

Conclusion

Stigmatization and discrimination against LGBT people deprives them of basic human rights, renders them vulnerable to high levels of abuse and violence, and bars them from taking advantage of many of the opportunities and resources available to their fellow citizens. These patterns profoundly disadvantage not only individual LGBT people, but also the many communities and countries that suffer the loss of their social, civic, and economic contributions. This Vision outlines the principles and steps that USAID will follow, in partnership with a wide array of champions and allies, to protect and empower LGBT people, increase the capacity of LGBT CSOs, and integrate attention to LGBT issues into our work, resulting in more effective and inclusive development results.

Box 1: Glossary of Key Terms

Ally – Someone who is not part of the LGBT community and supports the LGBT community

Asexual – Someone who does not have sexual desire for persons of the same sex or opposite sex

Bisexual – Emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to men and women

Gay – Emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to people of the same gender

Gender expression – Manifestation of one's gender identity; how a person behaves, appears or presents with regard to societal expectations of gender. One's gender expression may not necessarily match one's gender identity

Gender identity – Personal sense of one's gender — which may or may not align with norms attached to birth-assigned gender

Gender non-conforming – People who do not conform to social norms about how they should look or act based on their birth-assigned gender. Gender queer is sometimes used interchangeably with this term

Intersex – Physical range of conditions including congenital discrepancy or incongruity between genetic (or chromosomal) and phenotypic (or physical appearance) sex or in secondary sexual characteristics

Lesbian – A woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to other women

LGBT – An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. There are many other variations on this acronym that are used in different contexts, including, for example LGBTI, which adds a reference to intersex people

Sexual orientation – An emotional, romantic, sexual and relational attraction to another person; may be a same-sex orientation, opposite-sex orientation, bisexual orientation, or asexual

SOGI – sexual orientation and gender identity

Straight – A person whose emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction is to people of the opposite gender

Transgender – People who experience and/or express their gender differently from the social norms attached to their sex assigned at birth; it is an umbrella term that includes people who are transsexual, cross-dressers or otherwise gender non-conforming

transsexual – A medical term describing people whose gender identity and birth-assigned gender do not line up, and who often seek medical treatment to bring their body and gender identity into alignment

Other terms – Every country and society has its own terms and expressions for sexuality and gender, such as *kuchu* in Uganda and *hijra* in South Asia

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